

# DAIRY SCIENCE HAS A GLOBAL CHALLENGE

*By Pat Broering*

Long-recognized as a dairy science leader in the United States, Cal Poly is taking its expertise global.

Cal Poly's Dairy Products Technology Center (DPTC) and Food Science Australia recently signed an agreement to host student and staff exchanges and to collaborate on research, subcontracting and workshops.

The deal with Australia's leading food, health and nutrition research organization "is consistent with our efforts to reach out to the world and provide our students and staff with more global experiences and perspectives," said Phil Tong, director of the DPTC.

This agreement follows an announcement that the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences will also begin hosting Chinese students in fall 2009, as part of a joint master's degree program with Shanghai Jiao Tong University in China.

The first two Jiao Tong students will come to Cal Poly for the second half of a two-and-a-half year master's degree program. They will have completed mostly classroom courses at Jiao Tong, to be followed by 12 to 14 months focused largely on research at Cal Poly.

"The food industry in China is quite advanced overall, and consumers are seeking more value-added foods. So the potential is there for dairy," Tong said. "Cal Poly has a chance to play a role in helping China insure a safe and healthy food supply."

Sheng Yi, a director's assistant at the Chinese university's S. Luh Food Safety Center, recently spent seven months at Cal Poly as a visiting scholar in the DPTC. Working with Tong, Yi's goals were to gain familiarity with the California dairy industry and to educate Cal Poly on China's dairy and food sectors. She also became familiar with Cal Poly programs and the university environment so she could interest Chinese students in the value of the dual master's degree program.

"Dairy science is new at Jiao Tong," Yi said. "And our students will find Cal Poly's learn-by-doing education to be very helpful."

In addition to international collaboration, the Dairy Science Department is seeking to expand its expertise in global markets through a new faculty position supported with charitable gifts from the industry and alumni, a first for the department.

The endowed professorship in dairy foods science and technologies would increase global markets for U.S. products by providing technical expertise, advocacy, and vision to the California and U.S. dairy industry to ensure long-term viability of export markets.



## ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP TO INCREASE INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE

"As our industry increases its international presence, this is a natural evolution of our program. We will add to our nationally recognized technical capability for production in domestic markets by adding an essential global component," said Dr. Bruce Golden, head of the Dairy Science Department.

California's dairy industry is the largest in the nation and is in the best position to capitalize on increasing export opportunities of dairy foods. The Dairy Products Technology Center (DPTC) has created a legacy of leadership by providing world-class scientific solutions and training. The DPTC is the only national dairy center on the West Coast and is a key component in the U.S. dairy industry's growth strategy.

This new position will be held by a faculty member who is an expert in international products and technologies and, working with the talented DPTC faculty and staff and organizations such as the American Dairy Association, the National Dairy Council, and the U.S. Dairy Export Council, will provide the industry with expertise that is urgently needed.

## ADDING FOCUS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

As part of its strategic goals, the Dairy Science Department will also seek funding for a second endowed professorship which would focus on best dairy practices for the environment and water quality. For the long-term health of dairy producers, and the state's economy and all Californians, it is becoming increasingly crucial to find solutions to the impact on water quality and the global environment.

Cal Poly dairy science has an essential and unique role to play in addressing this already substantial effort by continuing its research in alternative methods of wastewater treatment and electrical power generation from dairy lagoon-produced methane.

"We are very proud that this department has been a leader in California's dairy industry for many, many decades," Golden said, "and we look forward to continuing that legacy and reaching out the international marketplace. Cal Poly Dairy Science will lead this industry into the future."



*Phil Tong received the 2008 Cargill Flavor Systems Food Specialties Award from the American Dairy Science Association. He was also elected vice president of the association and will serve as next year's president.*

Left to right: Maulik Shah, graduate student (completed 2009); Xiomara Elias, graduate student; Dr. Sheng Yi, visiting scholar; Dr. Phillip Tong; Elizabeth Ng, graduate student; Dr. Vandna Sikand, research scientist; and Scott Gualco, graduate student.



Photo: Chris Leschinsky